

NEWS RELEASE



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Healthy Kids halfway to goal of enrolling 80,000 more Oregon kids on health care

Healthy Kids, Oregon's newly expanded health coverage program for uninsured children, recently passed an important milestone: the halfway mark toward the goal of enrolling 80,000 more children by the end of this year.

As of March, 41,750 more Oregon children have been enrolled in Healthy Kids since the program expanded last summer, thanks to legislation passed by the 2009 Legislature and championed by Governor Kulongoski. In Multnomah County, 6,445 more kids now have health coverage through Healthy Kids since the program's expansion.

"It's exciting to see that our outreach efforts are paying off and, as a result, 41,750 more Oregon children can see a doctor when they need to," said Cathy Kaufmann, the Administrator of the State's new Office of Healthy Kids, which is part of the Oregon Health Authority.

"We're thrilled to hear that outreach and enrollment is going so well. We know that when kids have health care, they are equipped with the tools they need to guarantee their future success," said Robin Christian, Executive Director of Children First for Oregon, a child advocacy organization that supported the creation of Healthy Kids during the 2009 Legislature. "We are excited to keep up the work to ensure that every Oregon child can access quality, affordable health care."

The Office of Healthy Kids is working closely with local community organizations statewide, including a number of organizations in the Portland Metro area to help spread the word about Healthy Kids to families with uninsured children. The African American Health Coalition is a Healthy Kids grantee organization working to enroll kids in Multnomah County.

"We are excited with the success of Healthy Kids thus far. With high levels of unemployment over previous months it is vital to have an option like Healthy Kids for African American families to turn to," said Delana Maxwell, Healthy Kids Program Coordinator at the African American Health Coalition.

(more)

The Washington County Commission on Children and Families is a Healthy Kids grantee working to enroll kids in Washington County.

“In 2008 there were over 20,000 uninsured children in Washington County and that number only grew as the recession deepened. With the help of many other organizations here, we are working to make sure that every eligible child or youth in Washington County has access to basic health care through enrolling in Healthy Kids,” said Bill Thomas, Director of the Washington County Commission on Children and Families.

Healthy Kids covers all the care kids need, including regular check-ups, prescriptions, dental, vision, mental and behavioral health care. The program is open to any uninsured child legally residing in Oregon. No child will be turned away because of a pre-existing condition and coverage options are available to families at every income level.

Families with incomes at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (around \$44,100 for a family of four) qualify for free coverage for their children, while families with incomes between 200 and 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (up to about \$66,000 for a family of four) will pay a small portion (10-15 percent) of the premium.

Families who exceed this income limit may buy into the program at full cost. No child will be turned away because of a pre-existing condition.

Families with uninsured children can apply for Healthy Kids by calling 1-877-314-5678 or online at www.oregonhealthykids.gov. Families who would like help completing the application can find a list of community partners who provide this assistance on the Healthy Kids website.

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